



Our Little Lion



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Chapter 1 by Jack Frost

Arianna's first live piano concert was in an hour.

"I'm not ready! I don't know what to do—I don't think I've practiced enough..." Arianna fretted.

"Calm down, Arianna. You're gonna be great," Timothy said, as he put his hand on Arianna's shoulder. She shrugs the hand off with a small smile.

"Thanks Tim," she said. "I appreciate it. You ready?"

"Yeah. Let's do it. Let em' hear you roar" Tim said with a wink, then shifted his shoulders back into a more composed posture and led Arianna out, his rented tuxedo matching her smooth black silk dress.

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"Hey Vladimir! What are you doing here?" Adam said as he went to sit next to him.

"Nothing. Just waiting for the concert to start." Vlad stretched and yawned. "Hmm...I thought you weren't into these kind of things Vlad," Adam said, nudging Vladimir in the side. "Oh, I know why you're here. You're here for Arianna, aren't you?" Adam teased, playfully punching his

friend's arm.

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"Shut up," Vladimir said blushing. The principal walked on stage.

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"Ladies and gentlemen! May I introduce to you Miss Arianna Quinn and Mr. Timothy Quinn!"

He said. The audience clapped as they entered the stage. Tim looked down at Vladimir. Vlad

glared back. Tim gave a final cocky smile to Vlad before sitting down behind his cello.

Chapter 2 by Phantim



The concert was going wonderful, the sweet harmony of Tim's cello and Arianna's piano filled the air with magical notes that seemed to dance together in the air. The two on stage exchanged looks of longing and excitement, the talent show would be theirs for sure. Suddenly there was a loud **twang** as a wire snapped and the lights began to plummet toward the stage and Arianna. Looking up, Tim reacted quickly driving from his chair and pushing Arianna off her bench and out of the way. His quick reaction likely just saved her life, but he wasn't thinking of that now. He wasn't thinking of anything as his limp body lay underneath the heap of metal, lights, and wires. Screams of panic rang out through the auditorium as the parents saw what happened. Arianna grabbed Tim's hand and began crying. Several of the teachers ran up onto the stage and started to lift the lights of his body. Vlad and Adam ran to help too.

Minutes later as the Paramedic's rushed Tim to the Ambulance with his parents. Arianna stood at the doorway to the auditorium gently sobbing. She felt a warm jacket placed over her delicate tan shoulders. She looked up to see Vlad standing behind her, a sympathetic look on his face.

"Are you okay Arianna?" he asked.

"They... they said there wasn't enough room in the ambulance for me to go with him." she said with through a shaky voice.

"Is there anything I can do? I just got my license last week, do you want me to drive you to the hospital?" Vlad asks. Hoping she will say no, while simultaneously wanting the twenty minute car ride alone with her.

She looked up at him with teary eyes and nodded yes.

Chapter 3 by Jayde Avalon



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"Thank you," her weak, tremulous voice broke the awkward silence. She was still looking down, but had turned toward him slightly. He took this as a good sign.

Stopping at a red light, Vlad turned to Arianna and smiled warmly. "I hate to see you cry," he said. "I'll do anything I can to put a smile on that pretty face of yours."

She did smile, and even looked up into his eyes. He couldn't tell what she felt, but he had electricity pulsing up and down his body. Her hand subconsciously slipped out to tap invisible piano keys on the center console. His hand stealthily covered hers and linked with her fingers. She jumped. He lifted her hand to his mouth and gently kissed her fingers before the light turned green and they began moving again.

He could see her blushing.

When they finally parked at the hospital, Vlad got out first and hurried to the passenger side to help Arianna. Taking her hand, he let her steady herself on him, so as not to spill the hot cocoa he had just bought for her. He really is sweet, she thought.

Vlad kept her close as they approached the hospital, "to keep her warm," he said. Arianna's steps were unsteady, and she suddenly slipped, nearly taking him down with her.

"You can't walk on ice in those," Vladimir chided, frowning at her black platform shoes. "Here, I'll carry you," he offered, his arm around her back. "No, Vlad, it's ok..really...Vlad!" She protested in vain. He swept her up and carried her like a princess across the treacherous icy parking lot to the front doors of the hospital, where he finally set her down. Her eyes nervously avoided his as he smiled teasingly at her, still holding her close.

"That was embarrassing," she griped, blushing again as they stepped through the doors.

Chapter 4 by Jayde Avalon



As soon as they entered Timothy's room, Arianna rushed to his bedside and took his hand. Tears

began to flow again as she looked at the cast on his right arm, the brace around his body, and the large welt still visible on his hip. He had cracked ribs and a shattered elbow. As she laid her forehead against his, he closed his eyes and looked rather perplexedly at the

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"Ari?"

She looked up at the deep blue eyes that stared at her. "Tim!" She whispered, her face relaxing into a smile. "You shouldn't have done that, you idiot! Are you hurting?" She asked worriedly.

"Not as much as I would be if I /didn't/ do it," he replied with a smirk. "You'd have been hurt instead, and I couldn't have forgiven myself."

Vladimir rolled his eyes. He let the sappy chatter continue a few minutes before interrupting.

"Hey, 'Anna, it's getting late. We should probably get you home to rest. You've been through a lot today."

Arianna looked wistfully at Timothy. "They're letting me out in a week," he reassured her. "I'll be back at school before you know it, little lion." Wiping the tears from her cheeks with his free hand, he bid her goodnight and watched Vladimir escort her out of the room.

By the time they reached Vlad's car—Arianna's mother was out of town and her father was working late, so she had no ride—Arianna's face was cold from her tears and the winter air, and she had actually settled into his body as they walked. He didn't want to let her go now—he finally had her alone, all to himself again. The feeling of her body nestled against his was precious and priceless.

"Hey," he said, pulling her closer with his other hand, so she faced him. Her dark brown eyes, still pink from crying, held his with their magic stare. He found his hand involuntarily cup her cheek while his other arm held her tightly. "There's something I need to tell you."

"Vlad..." She began, trying to pull away. He held fast and leaned closer, so that his nose just touched hers. She began to squirm more forcefully, her breath becoming ragged. His right hand slid up her back, bracing it with his arm, while his left hand slid backward from her cheek and clutched the back of her neck. Arianna sucked in air through her teeth. "Vlad, please...don't do this." She gasped as his nose nuzzled her neck and his lips brushed her collarbone. She couldn't

push him away. She whimpered helplessly as he kissed her neck and shoulder over and over, holding her like he would never let her go. She was too weak to look into her eyes again.

"I love you," he whispered.

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Chapter 5 by Phantim



Arianna broke away from the kiss just in time to catch a glimpse of Tim in the window. The look on his face told her that he had seen it all. Oh no. She felt her heart drop to her stomach. This was all so wrong...

She turned and slapped Vlad in the face. She stormed away through the icy parking lot, tears running down her cheeks. She could hear him calling out to her from behind, but she just ran faster. She needed to get away from him, away from Tim, she wished she could get away from herself...

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Vlad looked up at hospital window and saw the problem. He felt oddly smug, if he could break them up, he felt confident Arianna would come back to him. They had a connection, and he had just shown her. He could tell that she wanted the kiss as much as he did, not his fault she felt guilty for wanting it. Vlad winked and waved at Tim up in the window who shot him back an icy glare. Looking away, Vlad got in his car and turned the key.

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Tim continued to look out at the window, watching Arianna continue to run through the parking lot as Vlad pulled out into the highway. It was hard not to have his feelings hurt. He had just saved her life, and of all people... that loser Vlad?

"At least have a little self respect, my little lion," he murmured.

He turned away from the window just in time to see the door open to his room.

"Oh baby you look so awful!" a girl in a tight cheerleader's outfit called out.

"You should see the other guy," Tim joked. Then walked over and gave her a hug and a kiss.

Close timing on that. Tim was not eager for Arianna to meet Paulina. Balancing two secret girlfriends was hard work

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